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MTG 38: Well Preserved Coins are Little Miracles; Plus - New Purchases

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This is Why We Can't Have Nice Things

It seems whenever I buy something new, something bad happens to it.

Within a week of buying every new car, someone's car door or a stray shopping cart has made a little dent in the side of it.

I was reminded of this truism this morning. I was looking at our kitchen table and the somewhat faded big red stain right in the center.

Flash back 10 years. We had 2 young kids, and our old kitchen table had permanent marker and glitter glue indelibly embedded in it from, well, 2 young kids.

I was tired of looking at that crappy old table so we started fresh with a beautiful new oak table. We admonished our kids to always put something on top of the table before starting art projects. Which they absolutely did, for a day or two anyway.

A week or so later I came home from a hard day of coin dealing and immediately noticed a large red stain on the new table. It looked as though someone slaughtered a medium-sized animal there. Neither kid did it, of course.

I set to work on removing it, but that stain wouldn't budge. That was a decade ago.

Every week since, when we clean the house and after every meal we give that stain an extra hard scrubbing. The stain is still there, but it has faded very slightly. I propose that the US Navy use whatever ink that stain was made from to coat our nuclear submarines; we'd never have to paint them again.

Why do I bring this up? Well, partly because that stain still really bugs me when I see it, but mostly to make a point about coins. Yes – this really does relate to coins.

I was reminded of humans' frequent failure to keep nice things in pristine condition when I purchased a collection from a local estate. It was a large collection consisting of very ordinary coins – circulated common date Morgan dollars, dateless Buffalo nickels, oodles of wheat cents and so on.

But in the midst of this there was a Morgan dollar. A beautiful, unmarred, superb uncirculated 1885 Morgan dollar (see below). It seemed to glow in the dark, especially in that morass of "stuff". How did it remain in this condition for all these years? And how did it end up in there? Seeing it in the midst of that typical, beat up coinage reminded me that every single high grade coin still in existence is a little round miracle.

These objects were made to be used, and used hard. When we see one that has somehow escaped the fate of nearly all of their brethren it gives me a renewed appreciation for each of them.

Six hacks to improve your coin buying...

... is a headline you'll never see in this e-newsletter. Er, not counting just now.

I see so many headlines these days with the word "hack" in them that I assume these articles are mostly written by, well, hack writers:

- * Twelve hacks to get your dog to eat more jello
- * Fifteen hacks to get rid of your hacking cough
- * Fourteen hacks to teach your child to count to fourteen

Enough.

Send a Friend a Freebie

If you think a fellow collector or dealer might enjoy these incredibly insightful articles along with images of gorgeous coins at practically give-away prices, let me know.

Drop me a line with their email address. I'll contact them and ask if they want to be added to the email list.

Most likely they will be grateful to you. Perhaps they will talk kindly of you behind your back. Maybe even send you an expensive birthday gift. Hey- it could happen!

The "Making the Grade" Featured Coin

1793 Chain Cent. AMERI Variety. PCGS graded Fine-15.

Sheldon-1, considered to be rarity-4. Here it is folks – the coin that is considered the very first regular issue of the Philadelphia mint. Nice brown color, no planchet defects, a bold chain and AMERI. You know you want one. \$27,500.

New Listings

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Dave is a contributor to the Redbook, as well as a member of the PCGS Board of Experts.

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1652 Pine Tree Shilling. PCGS graded VF30.

Small Planchet. 68.2 grains. Blue, russet and gray toning with a bold tree and a bold date. \$4750.

(circa 1694) Elephant Token. PCGS graded XF45.

Even brown, hard surfaces. Always a popular design. \$1450.

1786 Vermont Landscape Copper. PCGS graded VF35.

Vermontensium Redbook type. Ryder-6. A lovely milk chocolate brown coin, with hard surfaces. These are so difficult to find that are pleasing to the eye, as here. There are always – always – issues that collectors have to deal with; it is just a matter of finding a specimen where the issues are not bothersome. \$2950.

1835 Half Cent. PCGS graded MS64 Red [oght].

Cohen-1, rarity-1. Full, screaming mint red over full, screaming cartwheel luster. This coin has sat in its slab for over 25 years, so you can be assured the color is stable. A few carbon spots near the rims on both sides. PCGS #1170. \$3750.

1873 Two Cent Piece. NGC graded Proof-45.

Closed 3. A fantastic opportunity to obtain a choice, circulated example of this proof-only date. In high demand from those assembling matching sets of business strikes of this completeable series. \$2200.

1851-O Three Cent Silver. PCGS graded MS65 CAC.

A gem example of the only mint marked 3c silver issue. \$3450.

1944-S Washington Quarter. NGC graded MS68 CAC.

What can I say? Simply among the finest of this date that exists. \$5500.

1820 50C No Serifs on E's Redbook Type. PCGS graded AU50.

Overton-107, considered to be rarity-5. This is in constant demand from both Redbook type collectors and from die variety collectors. The finest known is just AU58. Even low grade & damaged specimens sell for several thousand dollars. This is an opportunity to fill that tough spot in your set with one of the highest graded specimens. PCGS# 39571. \$17,500.

1885 Morgan Dollar. PCGS graded MS66 CAC.

This is the very coin I referred to in the article above. This little jewel was in a collection of ordinary “stuff”. Somehow this coin escaped having the life beat out of it like nearly all of its companions. It makes me happy just to look at it. Perhaps it will do the same for you. \$700.

World Coins, Exonumia, Flotsam & Jetsam**1691 Ireland Limerick Besieged Halfpenny. PCGS graded AU50.**

A very high end example of this crude coinage. Struck over gun money, some of the undertype is visible. The “N” in HIBERNIA is backwards, there are die cracks everywhere and the engraving is laughably crude. A fun piece. \$895.

1792 Guatemala 8 Reales. PCGS graded XF45.

NG mint, M assayer. Rich, original toning and a scarcer mint too. \$795.

1795 Spain Half Real. PCGS graded AU58.

This diminutive coin (about the size of a half dime) is quite detailed & lustrous. A tough denomination to find. \$275.

(ca. 1790's). Hanging Man Farthing Token. NGC graded MS65 Red & Brown.

Middlesex-Spence's, Dalton & Hamer-1110. A popular motif – a man hanging from a gallows having been executed, END OF PAIN around the periphery (a play on words, referring to the American rebel & author Thomas Paine, who was none too popular among the British monarchy). The reverse shows Pandora's breeches on fire. The coin is on fire as well, retaining close to 100% of the red that it possessed on the day it was struck. \$2950.

1803 \$5 Kettle Token. PCGS graded MS63.

Judd-C1803-3. Listed in the appendix of the Judd pattern book, these pieces look like \$5 US gold coins but are actually gaming counters struck by the English firm of Kettle & Co. This specimen is in the running for finest known. \$1500.

1849-dated \$5 Gold Rush Counter. NGC graded MS64.

Often collected with other gold-rush era coinage & ephemera, this specimen is by far the finest example of this popular token I have seen. Full gold wash on both sides. Add your name to the illustrious pedigree: Ex. John Ford & Q. David Bowers. \$1200.

1852-dated '\$20' Brass Counter. NGC graded XF45.

A popular but rarely seen counter. Somewhat mottled lighter and darker brown patina. The record price for one of these was a raw specimen graded "nearly Extremely Fine" that sold for \$978 (Stacks 10/16/2007:3258). \$475.

(1863) Bolen's Bar Cent Stuck in Silver. PCGS graded MS62.

JAB-2. John Bolen's copy of the Bar Cent, stuck in silver and quite rare as such. The similar one in the Ford sale (Stacks 5/06:558) sold for \$7475. This one...\$5750.

circa 1863 Fredrick the Great medal in Fancy Box. Uncirculated [uncertified]

A beautiful bronze medal about the size of a half dollar. Frederick the Great's younger brother, Bubba-The-Slightly-Better-Than-Average, was always a bit jealous of him for some reason. Perhaps it was because of this medal, which comes with an elaborate box. \$165.

2008 \$50 Humbert Commemorative Copper Die Trial. Gem Uncirculated NGC.

This is a die trial of the restrike of the \$50 Humbert octagonal "slug". This is one of just 12 struck in Copper by the SS. Central America Marketing Group. \$2300.

2008 \$50 Humbert Commemorative Pewter Die Trial. Gem Uncirculated NGC.

This is a die trial of the restrike of the \$50 Humbert octagonal "slug". This is one of 49 struck in pewter by the SS. Central America Marketing Group. PCGS #661000. \$1900.

2008 2.5 Ounce "Humbert Commemorative" Octagonal Slug. NGC Gem Proof Ultra Cameo.

This piece uses 2.5 ounces of "Pure California Gold" according to the inscription on the reverse. The octagonal shape was chosen to commemorate the original Augustus Humbert fifty dollar gold pieces. 500 pieces were struck. PCGS #10361 \$3850.

1933 Huey Long Medal. NGC MS64.

A popular medal, made in the shape of a toilet seat. It commemorates an event where a loudmouth populist politician (Huey Long, a.k.a. "The Kingfish") was punched in the nose after he drunkenly soiled the pants leg of the person next to him in the men's room of a supper club. The incident received much publicity, culminating in the striking of this medal. One original was struck in gold and was to be presented to the person who punched Mr. Long, but it was never claimed. That gold specimen now resides in the ANS museum. \$750.

(2015 Restrike) Washington Before Boston Silver Medal. NGC graded Proof-70 Ultra Cameo.

A 1 ounce proof silver version of this rare and historic medal. If you don't feel like shelling out tens of thousands of dollars for an original, consider this substitute. \$240.

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